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Japan: Next Crisis in Asia

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JAPAN: NEXT CRISIS IN ASIA

Mr. President: The past ten years might well be termed the decade of Crisis diplomacy. Those charged with the conduct of foreign relations, particularly in recent times seem to be involved in a continual race against time. No sooner do they catch up with one crisis when another looms on the horizon and they are off again in hot pursuit. Trailing close behind them is the lengthening shadow of the atomic annihilation of civilization.

It is inevitable in international relations no less than in human relations that difficulties may sometimes arise suddenly and unexpectedly. One of the principal functions of an effective foreign policy, however, is to reduce such occurrences and to minimize their shock.

In this respect foreign policy is something like flood control. We take measures to make a Mississippi or a Missouri less dangerous to the nation. We heed the storm signals along the rivers and act to protect the valleys from the rising waters.

By the same token foreign policy should serve to safeguard the nation from perilous trends abroad. For the most part crises do not arise without warning. The danger signs can be seen long before a situation becomes acute. In more recent years, nevertheless, crises have often been permitted to creep up on us and strike suddenly. Each shock of this kind adds to the sense of futility which already grips many people in this country when they try to understand the international problems of the nation.

I believe the citizens of the United States are willing to face these problems but they must know what it is they have to face. As it is now, they are confronted one day with the threat of war and the next with the promise of peace. That alternating cycle of threat and promise serves only to spread confusion and uncertainty in this country. This is a weak base on which to build support for the measures the United States must pursue in its relation with other nations.

The people have a right to something more than a hand-to-mouth foreign policy just as they have a right to expect more than that kind of existence at home. They have a right to be kept fully and soberly informed on gathering difficulties before, not after they reach the crisis-stage. And they have a right to know whether everything that can be done is being done to minimize such difficulties.

Considerations of this kind lead me to return to a subject which I raised initially on the floor of the Senate, August 13th last year. Members of the Senate will recall the state of our foreign policy at that time. The nation had been caught off-guard by a crisis in Indochina engendered by the Geneva Conference and by another in France over the EDC.

It was necessary to deal with the immediate problems growing out of these two situations, and they were dealt with, by the Southeast Asia pact and by the London-Paris accords. These devices, for all their merits, however, served only to pick up the pieces. They did little to catch up with rapidly-moving developments either in Europe or Asia. In my remarks last August, I pointed out that:

the tide of international affairs is flowing on in the aftermath of Geneva to new crests elsewhere on the globe (to) areas which in the next few months may become keys of decision in the struggle to turn back the drive of totalitarian communism. These areas are Germany and Japan.

In the months since last August, however, our foreign policy has largely ignored these two key areas, particularly Japan. The difficulties inherent in them now are rapidly closing in on us.

Today, therefore, I want to redirect attention to one of these key areas -- to Japan. If we are not to face another crisis in that area then it seems to me of the highest importance that we review the situation respecting that Country without further delay. If we are ever to get out of the strait jacket of crisis-foreign policy we must look beyond the immediate and prepare now to deal with what lies ahead.

We cannot of course ignore the pressing situation in the Formosan Straits. But no one seems to know at this time what will happen there. The American people do not know. The Senate does not know. I doubt whether even the President knows. We have been told not once but many times by the Executive Branch that developments in that area have been left to the Chinese Communists.

Regardless of the outcome of the Formosan crises, however, developments in Japan are of the greatest significance to the United States and to all countries with interests in the Western Pacific. There is not likely to be a peaceful settlement in the Far East unless Japan is a party to it. Nor is there likely to be a major war in that part of the world into which the Japanese will not inevitably be drawn.

Japan, in short, is a key to war or peace in the Far East. Yet, in all the statements and press releases issued by the Executive Branch in recent weeks the Japanese have gone virtually unnoticed. If they are mentioned at all it is usually in an historical sense. It is as though these 90 million people in the core of the Western Pacific had sunk into a hole in the sea.

Japan has not disappeared. The Japanese islands are still with us, and beyond Formosa, beyond Korea they are the real objective of any aggression originating on the Asian mainland. They are the natural target because they contain the greatest concentration of industrial plants and industrial skills in Asia and that concentration includes the capacity for developing atomic energy. Japanese technical power welded to Chinese manpower and resources could raise the power of Asian communism enormously in a relatively short time. I need hardly point out the towering threat that this combination would represent not only to Alaska, the Philippines, Australia, or New Zealand but to the American continent itself.

That is one prospect in the Japanese situation. It is not the only one. It may be that instead of trending towards war, events in the Far East will move away from war. It may be that the cease-fire in Korea and the cease-fire in Indochina are preliminaries to a similar truce in the Formosan Straits. If that is the case then the three points of military contact between the communist and the free nations in the Western Pacific will have been stabilized. The stage will have been reached when a general settlement in that region would become possible.

In that event, the situation in Japan will be of inestimable importance. In peace, no less than in war, the 90 million Japanese are a decisive factor. They have much to contribute to the building of the conditions of peace in Asia. The energy generated by their intelligence, their skills and their industriousness must find a constructive outlet of this kind or it will surely discover a destructive one. The Japanese can go forward with other nations in peaceful progress or they can turn off again on the road to renewed conflict. The only path not open to them is that which leads back to the Age of Exclusion.

Before Japan drifts into the decisions from which there is no returning, before the die is cast for war or peace in the Far East, it seems to me essential that we ourselves comprehend fully what our objectives are in that region. It is also essential that we express these objectives through our foreign policy with a clarity and an affirmativeness that will be understood by friend and foe alike. It is too late for that in Korea. It is too late for that in Indochina. It is too late for that in Formosa. We have drifted in all of these regions until they have now become areas of crises and they are being dealt with by a crisis-foreign policy.

It may still not be too late, however, in Japan.

This country's interests, as I understand those interests, would best be served by a situation in which an independent and self-supporting Japan lives in peace in the midst of independent, and self-supporting Asian nations. That kind of a situation would contribute enormously to the security of the United States and all countries with interests in the Western Pacific.

It would permit trade, scientific and cultural relations to flourish with consequent benefit to us as well as to others. It would provide an atmosphere in which the concept of human freedom can survive and grow in the Far East.

We may not be able to achieve these objectives next year, five years from now, or fifty. But let us at least keep in mind what they are. Let us know where we are trying to go before we set out.

What is of the greatest significance in these American objectives of security, trade, freedom and scientific and cultural exchange is that they need not conflict with the interests, the real interests of the Japanese people, the Filipinos or any other peoples in the Western Pacific, including the Chinese people as distinct from their masters. Our national interests are in harmony, not in dissonance with those of all peoples in the Far East except a small power-drunk minority. That minority of arrogant would-be conquerors, have kept the region in turmoil through the past decade. They have exacted a vast tribute of human suffering and material sacrifice to feed their ambitions.

With that minority, wherever it may raise its head in the region, there can be no compromise of principle. Nor need there be. So long as it is clear that our national objectives are in accord with those of the people of the area, we shall not lack allies in this struggle, whether it lasts one year or a hundred, whether it is peaceful or violent.

It is one thing to define objectives. It is another to achieve them. We cannot will our objectives into being by the wave of a wand. We cannot buy them into being. We cannot talk them into being. We cannot bomb them into being.

We can only work, steadily to bring them into being. Even in this approach there is a limitation. Enormous historical forces -- some ancient, some modern -- are present in Asia. Nationalism, democracy, religion, Marxism, technological development, population pressures, and many others move throughout the region in obscure patterns. Responsibility for creating circumstances of peace and progress in the Far East out of the interplay of these forces rests in the first instance with the people of each Asian nation; beyond them, with the region as a whole. The amount of lasting influence which this country or any other country outside the region can exert by foreign policies alone over the flow of events in Asia is far less than that which we exercise over a Mississippi or a Missouri. Our foreign policy, whether it involves military, economic or diplomatic measures, has a role to play in this situation but it is, at most, a peripheral role.

But just as we do not abandon flood control because the rivers are not easily tamed, we cannot abandon our legitimate objectives in the Far East. For, we will either work with others for the ends of common security and progress in the Western Pacific, for a peace of free men -- or we shall work much harder merely to save our skins when some new crisis finally flows over the flood-stage into a great new war.

Those are the alternatives before us. If the American people know the facts, if their leadership is genuinely positive, there is little doubt as to the choice.

Some of the most important of these facts concern Japan. They must be faced bluntly and they must be faced now.

Since the end of World War II, the Japanese people have moved a long way from the repressive institutions which led them into that disastrous conflict. There are now strong forces for peaceful democratic progress working inside Japan. This does not mean, however, that the Japanese people are permanently free of the dangers of aggressive totalitarianism. It would be delusive for them as well as for ourselves to assume that they are. A new totalitarianism could be induced in Japan either by Asian communism from the mainland or by regressive forces within Japanese society itself or by a strange alliance of both.

Under the occupation, this country did much to encourage the growth of free and peaceful institutions in Japan. The Japanese Peace Treaty negotiated by the present Secretary of State under the previous Administration was an admirable attempt to consolidate those gains.

The Occupation and the Treaty on the whole were actions of an America which, with restraint and dignity, sought to contribute to the development of a situation of mutual benefit to all in the Far East. Their effects will not easily be lost on the Japanese people. They will weigh heavily in the balance of the future of Japan.

Will they be sufficient, however, to tip the balance towards peace and progress in Japan? Do they offset the alternating attraction and fear engendered by Asian communism across the China Seas? Above all, are they adequate to allay the threat of hunger which hangs over the Japanese people?

It does little good to set a man free, if the door to elementary survival and development is shut in his face. And what is true of men is in many

ways true of nations. That is the first reality which must be faced with respect to the Japanese situation.

Within Japan, measures can be taken which will go a long way towards dealing with this problem. I do not propose to catalogue the ills that beset the Japanese economic structure and their remedies. That is hardly the function of the government of the United States, let alone of the Senate. The Japanese know what the ills are; they have expounded at length in the public press and in the Diet on the inequities and inefficiencies which result from them.

The initiative, the leadership in correcting these ills must come from within Japan itself. This country cannot presume to supply it, nor can any other country. To attempt to do so would simply result, as it has elsewhere in Asia, in the expenditure of vast sums with little tangible accomplishment.

There are other aspects of the Japanese situation, however, with which in concert with other nations we must deal if there is to be peace in the Far East. To put the problem bluntly, the Japanese people must fish and trade abroad on a vast scale if they are to sustain themselves in a tolerable fashion. They have been able to do neither adequately since World War II.

Important fishing grounds off the North Asian coast have been closed to them by the policies of the communist countries and Korea. Their trade with the Asian mainland, once a mainstay of their economy, has been reduced almost to insignificance. Their commercial relations with Southeast Asia and the rest of the world hardly begin to meet their needs.

In the past 10 years, the margin between survival and starvation for millions of Japanese has been provided largely by the United States. Billions

of dollars have been made available in direct aid or by purchases in connection with the Korean conflict and defense requirements in the Western Pacific.

Outlays of this kind are palliatives, not cures. A lasting solution to Japan's economic dilemma as I mentioned before, depends in part on actions which can only be taken by the Japanese themselves. It also depends in part on the policies and attitudes of other nations, particularly those with a vital stake in the Far East.

I raised this question in my remarks in the Senate last August in these terms:

Unless concerted steps are taken...where are the Japanese to turn for survival? There is no reason to assume that they will not turn away from the present alinement (with the free nations). There is no reason to assume that they will not veer toward Communist China, toward the Soviet Union or both.

To the best of my knowledge, concerted steps have not been taken. Is it any wonder, then, that the new Japanese government under Premier Hatoyama has come to office largely on a platform of "normalizing" relations with the Asian mainland?

If the communist countries seek to weaken the ties which presently hold Japan to freedom, they are not without resources to achieve this objective. Trade inducements can be offered particularly with respect to the Soviet Maritime provinces, Manchuria and North China. There are fishing and other concessions which could be made in and around Sakhalin and the Kuriles. Rice, coal and other resources can come from Northern Viet Nam.

How shall we deal with the situation in Japan? With more crisis-foreign policy? With millions in new aid? By a competition of concessions with the Communist countries for Japan's favor? Our national interests have been obscured time and again, by ill-conceived negative measures of that kind.

When I spoke on this subject last year there was still ample time to provide leadership to the free nations in developing common policies respecting Japan. Months have gone by and little appears to have been done. We have drifted and drifted, only to find ourselves back once again at Yalta. The needle of the compass apparently can direct us to no other point on the globe.

And while we are constantly beckoned backwards in this manner, events have moved forward in the Far East. Japan is now on the verge of transcendent decisions which will move the balance in Asia towards peace or towards war. Other nations, including our own, cannot evade partial responsibility for the manner in which these decisions are made.

I do not know whether the Japanese will choose the path of peace. The foreign policies of this or any other country cannot force or bribe the Japanese into peace, the peace of free men. That is a decision which they must make themselves.

What we can do, what positive policies in the Far East will do, is to work to make possible a Japanese decision for peace. Such policies, if they are to be effective, must come to grips with two realities in the Far Eastern situation -- the vital political and strategic position of Japan in the Western Pacific and the serious economic plight of the Japanese people. There is still

a third reality, and it, too, must be recognized; the bitter remembrances of peoples who were overrun by the Japanese militarists in World War II, and the fear and suspicions which these remembrances engender.

There are many tangible ways in which these realities of the Japanese situation can be translated into positive action for peace. Let me, by way of illustration, point out some of them. These illustrations are in part incorporated into our official policy and in part they are not. In any event, it seems to me that a positive foreign policy on our part would seek to obtain the widest possible international agreement on these points.

1. Immediate admission of Japan to the United Nations.
2. Territorial adjustments along Japan's borders.
3. Japanese participation in any international conference for the general settlement of Far Eastern problems.
4. Japanese access to fishing grounds open to them before the war, on a responsible and equitable basis.
5. Encouragement of a regional investment pool in the Far East with full Japanese participation.
6. Encouragement of the use of Japanese skills in the technical assistance programs of the Far East.
7. Convening of a series of Far Eastern conferences to deal frankly and realistically with the related problems of Japanese reparations and freer trade within the region, and similar issues, the solution of which will make possible a self-supporting Japan in a self-supporting Asia.

These courses of action, as I pointed out, are illustrative only. I do not know if all or any of them are practicable at the moment. Only the Executive Branch which is responsible for the conduct of foreign policy is in a position to know that. I believe, however, that action along the lines I have outlined is essential if we are to forestall a crisis in Japan and the crisis-foreign policy which will inevitably follow. Such action can help to create a situation in the Far East which will serve our national interests as well as the interests of Japan and other nations.

It is not our responsibility alone to act in the present situation. It is not Japan's alone. It is the common responsibility of all nations which really desire peace and progress in the Far East.

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